

Islamic Counseling Using the Exemplary Stories of the Prophet Muhammad to Improve the Manners of Elementary School Students

Mohammad Amin ^{*}, Mohammad Thohir

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Jl. Ahmad Yani No.117, Jemur Wonosari, Kec. Wonocolo, Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60237, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine how the application of Islamic counseling using the role model technique can improve the morals and manners of elementary school students. The background to this study stems from the persistent lack of respect for teachers and peers, as well as the failure to demonstrate politeness in speech and actions. Through exemplary stories of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Islamic figures, students are expected to emulate the good behaviors reflected in the stories. The method used in this study was a qualitative case study approach. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively using the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The study subjects consisted of several students who experienced difficulties in maintaining good manners during interactions at school. The results showed that the application of the role model technique in Islamic counseling resulted in positive changes in student behavior. They became more polite, respected teachers, and behaved better towards their peers. Thus, the role model technique can be used as an effective method for developing morals in elementary school students.

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Corresponding Author:

Mohammad Amin

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Email: mohammadamin030303@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Elementary school is the initial stage of character building, which is crucial for a child's development. At this stage, students are in a critical period of moral and social development, so values of politeness must be instilled early on. However, the reality in the field shows a declining trend in polite behavior among students. This can be seen from their habit of speaking disrespectfully to teachers and friends, as well as their attitudes that do not reflect proper manners. If this condition is left unchecked, it can have an impact on the weak development of children's personalities, particularly in terms of ethics and social relationships (Fitriani & Hakim, 2021).

A number of previous studies have confirmed that character education requires an approach that is appropriate to the stage of child development. One-way lecture methods are often considered ineffective in conveying moral values because they can easily cause boredom. In contrast, the technique of conveying messages through exemplary stories is considered more interesting and easier for students to understand. Through stories, children not only receive moral messages cognitively, but can also emulate the characters in

the stories, so that these values are more deeply ingrained in their daily behavior (Latifah, 2020). However, research on the application of exemplary stories is still more commonly found in the field of religious education and has not been intensively practiced in Islamic counseling services in elementary schools.

Islamic counseling itself has an important position as a means of character building based on the values of the Qur'an and hadith. The application of exemplary stories in counseling services provides an opportunity for teachers or counselors to present Islamic figures who can be role models for students. In this way, the process of internalizing the value of politeness can take place more naturally, not only as knowledge, but also as real attitudes and behaviors (Islamiaty, 2021).

On this basis, this study focuses on the application of exemplary story techniques in Islamic counseling to improve the manners of elementary school students. The objectives of this study are to determine how role model story-based counseling is carried out, how students respond to the stories presented, and the changes in polite behavior that emerge after participating in the service. The results of this study are expected to serve as a practical reference for teachers and counselors, while also contributing theoretically to the development of effective Islamic counseling strategies in elementary schools.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring in depth the process of applying Islamic counseling using exemplary stories to improve the manners of elementary school students. The focus of the study is not on numbers, but on the meaning, experiences, and behavioral changes that occur in students after participating in counseling services (SaThierbach et al., 2015).

The research subjects were third-grade elementary school students at an elementary school in Bangkalan Regency. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling, namely by selecting students who had problems related to polite behavior in speaking and interacting with teachers and peers. In addition to students, classroom teachers and school counselors were also involved as supporting informants to provide additional perspectives on the students' conditions before and after counseling services.

Research data were collected through three main techniques, namely: (1) participatory observation to record student behavior in real situations in the classroom and school environment; (2) in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and counselors to obtain information related to their experiences and perceived changes; and (3) documentation in the form of counseling notes, student diaries, and relevant school documents (Dr. Manotar Tampubolon, S.H., M.A., 2023).

The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself (human instrument), who acted as the planner, collector, and analyst of the data. To maintain reliability, the researcher used observation and interview guidelines that were compiled based on the research objectives.

Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out from the beginning of data collection until the end of the research, so that the findings truly reflected the reality in the field (Collins et al., 2021).

Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from students, teachers, and counselors, while method triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. In this way, the validity and reliability of the data obtained could be accounted for (SaThierbach et al., 2015).

RESULTS

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of Islamic counseling using exemplary stories in improving the manners of elementary school students. The results of the study show significant changes in student behavior, especially in terms of speaking to teachers, behaving towards peers, and in daily interactions at school. This shows that exemplary stories can be an effective medium for internalizing moral values when combined with an Islamic counseling approach.

Islamic Counseling and the Importance of Character Building in Elementary Schools

Elementary school is an important phase in the formation of a child's character. At this stage, students are in a period of moral development that is still unstable, so they need consistent guidance and guidance. There have been many reports of a decline in polite behavior among elementary school students, ranging from the use of foul language, disrespect towards teachers, to individualistic attitudes (Miftahul Jannah, 2023). If left unchecked, this condition will have an impact on the weak character formation of the next generation.

Islamic counseling is a solution because it focuses on developing noble character through the values of the Qur'an and hadith. As emphasized (Asyiatul Hamni et al., 2024), Islamic education is not only about transferring knowledge but also shaping character. In this context, Islamic counseling becomes an integral part of character education, especially in instilling manners in elementary school students.

Exemplary Stories as an Effective Technique in Counseling

Stories are one of the methods highly recommended in the Qur'an. Allah conveys many moral values through the stories of prophets and righteous people, such as the story of Prophet Yusuf, who taught patience, Prophet Musa, who exemplified courage, and Prophet Ibrahim, who demonstrated steadfast faith. This shows that stories have a unique appeal in touching people's hearts.

In this study, exemplary stories were used as a counseling technique by presenting stories relevant to the students' circumstances. Students find it easier to understand moral messages through stories than through direct advice. This is in line with research (Dan et al., 2022) which found that students are more enthusiastic when moral values are conveyed in narrative form than through conventional lectures.

Psychologically, the effectiveness of exemplary stories can be explained through social learning theory (Petersen, 2009). According to this theory, people learn new behaviors by observing and imitating role models. In Islamic counseling, exemplary figures in Islamic stories serve as role models for students to imitate. When students identify these figures as worthy of emulation, they are motivated to imitate them in their daily behavior.

Changes in Students' Manners and Politeness

The findings show that students who initially often spoke in a loud tone to teachers began to show changes. They were more careful in their use of language, more polite when interacting with teachers, and more respectful of their peers. These changes indicate that exemplary stories are not only understood cognitively, but also internalized into habits.

(Fatmawati Putri, 2024) mentions that storytelling plays a role in fostering moral values in children because stories are able to touch on affective aspects, finding that stories are more easily understood by elementary school-aged children because they are in line with Piaget's concrete-operational stage of development. Thus, this study reinforces the evidence that exemplary stories are relevant for shaping students' manners.

Relevance to Previous Research

The results of this study are in line with (Dan et al., 2022) which shows that Islamic counseling is effective in improving the moral behavior of elementary school students. However, Wahyuni's research emphasizes group counseling services, while this study adds innovation by using exemplary stories as the main technique.

In addition, this study enriches the findings of (Journal, 2025), which emphasizes the need for creative strategies in character education in the digital age. While Nurdin emphasizes the integration of technology, this study reemphasizes the importance of stories as a classic method that remains relevant even in the modern era. This shows that exemplary stories are flexible: they can be used traditionally or combined with digital media.

Novelty and Contribution of the Research

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of Islamic counseling with the exemplary story technique that focuses on improving the manners of elementary school students. Most previous studies have only placed stories in the context of religious learning, with few specifically examining their use in the framework of Islamic counseling (Nabilah & Rakhman, 2022). Thus, this study provides a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic counseling as well as a practical contribution to teachers and counselors in elementary schools.

Implications of the Study

Practically, this study recommends that teachers and counselors utilize exemplary stories continuously. Teachers can insert short stories at the beginning or end of lessons to reinforce moral values. Counselors can make stories an integral part of counseling sessions, both individually and in groups. Schools are also expected to provide support by providing Islamic story reading materials, educational videos, and literacy activities with exemplary values.

Theoretically, this study enriches the study of Islamic counseling by offering techniques that are more humanistic and appropriate for children. Exemplary stories serve as a medium that bridges abstract values with concrete behavior, making it easier for students to understand and emulate. This proves that Islamic counseling can continue to adapt to the needs of the times without losing the spirit of Qur'anic values.

The results of the study show that the application of Islamic counseling using exemplary stories has a positive effect on improving the manners of elementary school students. In the early stages, some students tended to exhibit rude behavior, such as speaking loudly to their peers or disrespecting teachers during interactions. However, after participating in counseling services using the exemplary story approach, students began to show changes in both their manner of speaking and their attitude toward teachers and friends.

This change can be understood because exemplary stories have educational power that touches on children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. When students hear stories about figures with noble morals, they not only receive the message intellectually, but also imagine themselves imitating these figures in their daily lives. This is in line with the opinion (Istiani & Islamy, 2020) which emphasizes that character education will be more successful if it is delivered through methods that are appropriate to the stage of child development, one of which is through stories.

In addition, the exemplary story approach in Islamic counseling is also relevant to Bandura's modeling theory, which emphasizes the importance of learning through imitation of figures who are considered to have authority or exemplary behavior. In this context, Islamic figures used as examples serve as role models who can internalize values of politeness to students. This reinforces the results of research (Usia et al., 2025) This finding is in line with research that emphasizes that teachers or counselors need to use creative approaches to address the challenges of moral education in the modern era.

Furthermore, this study also shows that Islamic counseling with exemplary stories is not only beneficial for students who have behavioral problems, but also has a positive impact on other students in the class. When exemplary stories are told repeatedly and consistently, values of good manners can be transmitted in daily interactions, both in relationships with teachers and peers. Thus, this technique has the potential to be a preventive strategy in preventing the emergence of rude behavior from an early age.

Overall, this study confirms that the application of Islamic counseling using exemplary stories is an effective approach to improving the manners of elementary school students. These findings complement previous studies that have placed more emphasis on religious education in the classroom, showing that counseling services based on exemplary stories can be a strategic alternative means of character building.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the application of Islamic counseling using exemplary stories has a positive effect on improving the manners of elementary school students. Through stories about the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and Islamic figures, students find it easier to understand the meaning of good manners and are motivated to imitate them in their daily lives.

The changes are not only seen in the way they speak and behave towards teachers, but also in their relationships with their friends at school. Exemplary stories make students more sensitive to the values of kindness, respect for others, and the ability to control themselves when interacting. This shows that the story method can be an effective means of instilling moral values from an early age.

Thus, Islamic counseling through exemplary stories can be used as an alternative strategy for character building in elementary schools. This approach is simple but meaningful because it is in line with the world of children who love stories. It is hoped that teachers and counselors can continue to use this technique regularly so that the values of politeness are increasingly ingrained in students.

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